



## Information for Educators

### What is the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium?

Smarter Balanced is a state-led consortium working collaboratively to develop next-generation assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. The Consortium involves educators, researchers, policymakers, and community groups in a transparent and consensus-driven process to help all students thrive in a knowledge-driven global economy.

Smarter Balanced is guided by the belief that a balanced, high-quality assessment system—including formative, interim, and summative components—can improve teaching and learning by providing information and tools for teachers and schools to help students succeed.

### What is the Smarter Balanced Assessment?

A computer adaptive summative assessment administered in Mathematics and English Language Arts in grades 3-8 during the last 8 weeks of the school year. The use of computer adaptive technology is more precise and efficient than fixed-form (paper/pencil) testing. Computer adaptive testing adjusts to a student's ability by basing the difficulty of future questions on previous answers, providing more accurate measurement of student achievement, particularly for high- and low-performing students.

Smarter Balanced assessments go beyond multiple-choice questions and include constructed response, technology-enhanced questions, and performance tasks. Performance tasks allow students to complete an in-depth project that demonstrates analytical skills and real-world problem solving. The estimated time for test administration is around 4 hours for Smarter ELA assessments in each grade, and around 3½ hours in Grades 3-5 for the mathematics assessment and around 4 hours in Grades 6-8. The Smarter tests are **not timed** and these are projected testing times and may vary based on students' ability levels.

### How are the test results used?

Timely and meaningful assessment information can offer specific information about areas of performance so that teachers can follow up with targeted instruction, students can better target their own efforts, and administrators can more fully understand what students know and can do, in order to guide their curriculum and professional development decisions.



Teachers, principals, and parents can receive results from computerized assessments in a faster turn-around pace. Faster results mean that teachers can use the information from optional interim assessments throughout the school year to differentiate instruction and better meet the unique needs of their students.

By collaborating with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), the other assessment consortia, Smarter is able to ensure that there is comparability across the two assessments for every grade.

### **Does a shared assessment mean a shared or common curriculum?**

No. Curriculum decisions are best made by educators at the local levels. States participating in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium have access to professional development materials and instructional resources for teachers through a digital library. These tools are optional and can be used by districts, schools, and teachers, as needed, to complement their curriculum.

#### **What type of scores will be provided?**

The Smarter Summative Assessment provides information about what students know and can do in relation to the CCSS. Students receive a score based on their performance. Each score will fall in one of four levels:

- **Level 4 (Draft)** – Student demonstrates thorough understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills associated with college content-readiness.
- **Level 3 (Draft)** – Student demonstrates adequate understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills associated with college content-readiness.
- **Level 2 (Draft)** – Student demonstrates partial understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills associated with college content-readiness.
- **Level 1 (Draft)** – Student demonstrates minimal understanding of and ability to apply the knowledge and skills associated with college content-readiness.

### **Where can I find sample or practice test questions?**

Sample test questions are available at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/sample-items-and-performance-tasks/>. Actual test items are not released.

There is a practice and a training test available to help everyone build awareness of the Smarter Balanced assessment functions and to increase teacher and student proficiency in navigating the applications, item types, and tools intended for operational assessment, as well as to provide a feel for the kind of items tested in Smarter assessments.

Practice Test questions include the full range of Smarter Balanced item types for both ELA and mathematics--selected-response items, constructed-response items, technology-enhanced items, and performance tasks.

Practice Test available at: <http://oea.dpi.wi.gov/assessment/Smarter/sampleitems>

Training Test available at: <http://oea.dpi.wi.gov/assessment/Smarter/sampleitems>

### **What are the Common Core State Standards?**

Developed voluntarily and cooperatively by 48 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia, the Common Core State Standards offer schools, teachers, students, and parents clear, understandable, and consistent standards in English language arts and mathematics. The CCSS defines the knowledge and skills students should take away from their K-12 schooling to be successfully prepared for postsecondary and career opportunities. More than 40 states have adopted the Common Core State Standards.

For more information about the Smarter Balanced Assessment, contact the Office of Student Assessment at [osamail@dpi.wi.gov](mailto:osamail@dpi.wi.gov)